

Field Junior School

Watford Field Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 0AZ

Inspection dates

23–24 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- From above average starting points, pupils make exceptional progress in their learning, especially in mathematics and writing, where a high proportion of them reach higher standards. Progress in reading is also extremely strong. The proportion of pupils achieving at the higher level is above average.
- An engaging, thoughtfully planned curriculum gives pupils opportunities to excel and make strong progress across a wide range of subjects. Pupils leave school confident, articulate and very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Staff are highly motivated, monitor progress very carefully in lessons, and have strong subject knowledge. Their excellent teaching and high expectations have a direct impact on the strong outcomes that pupils achieve.
- The governing body gives both resolute support and appropriate challenge to leaders. Governors know the school well, making frequent checks on the effectiveness of leaders' work to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Senior leaders are modest about their achievements, often understating their successes and preferring to focus their energies on systematically securing the best education possible for pupils.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged, or who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, are extremely well provided for. Staff who support these pupils offer highly effective care, support and guidance. As a result, pupils make strong progress in their learning and their personal development.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons, around school and on the playground. Their attitudes to learning, together with the pride they take in their work, are exemplary.
- Parents are highly supportive and extremely positive about the school. Effective communication means any issues brought to the attention of staff are quickly resolved. Parents also say that their children are very happy and safe and make excellent progress at school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. Pupils are thoughtful. They know about different cultures and are developing strong values and positive attitudes that will support them well in becoming good citizens.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should ensure that:
 - recent work to refine the assessment of pupils' skills in subjects other than English and mathematics is embedded across the school
 - the existing analysis of intervention strategies is refined so that every learning session has maximum impact
 - feedback provided by teachers in all subjects follows school policy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The senior leadership team has created a positive climate where exceptionally constructive relationships and a calm, purposeful environment promote strong academic achievement. Staff recognise that high academic achievement is dependent on pupils' strong personal development, so they ensure that pupils feel happy, safe and fully motivated.
- The school's success is rooted in stable, consistent leadership, excellent teamwork and effective collaboration between staff, pupils, parents and carers, and governors, who all share the same ambition for excellence.
- The school's development has been steered by the skilful leadership and the thoughtful, determined pursuit of improvement by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Excellent leadership stems from the way that senior leaders model their high expectations, and by routinely checking that staff and pupils are fulfilling them. Leaders have created a culture where staff are trusted, motivated and appreciated.
- Leaders are thorough and consistent when assuring the quality of provision. Reviewing the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is integral to leaders' everyday work. Senior leaders ensure that the school's culture does not include any excuses for underachievement.
- Pupils enter the school with above average levels of attainment. Leaders work relentlessly to ensure that the curriculum, assessment procedures and the quality of teaching are powerful drivers. This enables pupils to make excellent progress in every subject and across every year group.
- Subject leadership is excellent, particularly in English and mathematics, but also in other subjects. Where areas for improvement are identified, support is quickly introduced if needed. The wider leadership team has excellent capacity and provides outstanding support for senior leaders. The religious education (RE) leader, for example, has expert theological knowledge and offers insightful leadership for curriculum development and planning.
- The school provides equality of opportunity for everyone, ensuring that pupils have the chance to participate, succeed and excel across a wide range of activities and aspects of learning. Leaders ensure that economic disadvantage, the diverse levels of competency with speaking English, or any specific learning needs do not impose a barrier to any pupil's participation or achievement.
- Leaders have developed an appropriately balanced, engaging curriculum, which is broadened by a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including trips, visitors to the school, clubs and other activities. The curriculum is further enhanced by high-quality, specialist provision. Pupils have many opportunities to immerse themselves more deeply in different areas of learning. Modern language learning is a strength of the school. A native speaker supports French teaching, and a native Mandarin speaker has ensured that Year 6 pupils can converse in Mandarin to an extremely high standard.
- The high-quality displays around the school celebrate the rich and varied learning that

the pupils have experienced. This year, for example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 are being introduced to 'mindfulness' in order to deepen their concentration skills. Work on Buddhism, recounting the eruption of Mount Vesuvius as an eye-witness and writing poetry in different styles, combined with environmental studies, and an in-depth study of the Vikings help to foster pupils' love of learning. The curriculum enables pupils to develop the self-assurance and confidence to take on new challenges, while widening their experiences and raising their aspirations.

- Excellent support for families is pivotal to the success of the school. Staff are quick to identify possible barriers to pupils' high achievement and these are quickly addressed. Parental responses confirm the many occasions that the school has provided personal support for parents and children in times of need.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and, within this, the promotion of fundamental British values are at the heart of the school's everyday work. The school successfully celebrates people's differences, encouraging pupils to be interested in, and respectful of, and the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of others.
- The school is excellent at integrating pupils who join the school at times other than the start of Year 3, including those who speak English as an additional language and pupils who have had a turbulent education, or who face challenging circumstances.
- The school makes excellent use of its additional funding, both for the pupil premium and the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium, and can demonstrate that it uses these resources to secure the best possible outcomes. Additional lunchtime sports activities, run by specialist sports staff in the well-equipped, large indoor facility, help to keep pupils active even during the winter months.
- Leaders are keen to ensure that more pupils exceed national expectations for achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics. Recent work to refine the assessment of pupils' skills in these subjects is underway, but it is not fully embedded across the school.
- Pupils who are at risk of falling behind receive swift intervention to help them catch up. Nevertheless, the existing analysis of this support does not ensure that maximum impact is derived from every learning session.

Governance

- Governors are hardworking, well informed and skilfully led. There is an excellent range of professional skills among the governors, including experts with backgrounds in education, social care and youth work. Governors provide effective strategic leadership, while also fulfilling their statutory duties. They carefully examine information about progress and attainment and ensure that senior leaders furnish them with additional information and records to deepen their understanding of how well pupils are doing.
- Governors have a clear and comprehensive understanding of their roles and are well equipped to fulfil their responsibilities. They have a clear oversight of financial matters and ensure the judicious management of resources, including the school's allocation of additional funding to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils. The impact of this work was seen in their careful analysis of different options before purchasing a software package to help leaders refine their assessments of pupils' progress. Governors are

assigned to specific year groups, enabling them to track pupils' achievements and monitor their experiences as they move up through the school.

- The governing body strikes the right balance between supporting the school and holding leaders to account. Regular visits and helpful reports ensure that governors understand the school's strengths and its priorities for improvement. Teachers' performance is carefully considered when making decisions about pay progression. The chair attends meetings between senior leaders and the local authority's improvement partner. This gives him a clear insight into self-evaluation processes and school's development planning.
- Governors also take account of pupils' views, following the work of the school's pupil parliament, for example in making funds available for recent projects, such as installing an artificial, all-weather surface for recreation.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school is meticulous in ensuring that it meets all statutory guidance, including the safe recruitment of staff. Leaders have created a culture of vigilance, with pupils' welfare at the heart of the school's work.
- All staff are well trained and understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe. The high level of trust between adults and children means that pupils are confident to share their concerns and ask for support if necessary. Parents, staff and pupils know that senior leaders are approachable, and have no hesitation in sharing their worries, safe in the knowledge that the school will do all it can to help and support them.
- Leaders and staff work effectively with external partners to support pupils who are vulnerable.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- All teachers have the highest expectations of how pupils should behave and how they will engage and contribute in lessons. Teaching is confident, sharply focused and pitched to meet the needs of pupils. Teachers plan lessons very effectively so that lesson time is used to the full. Learning is interesting and engaging. This high-quality planning, combined with excellent behaviour management, ensures that no learning time is wasted and that pupils work hard.
- Teachers work effectively as a strong, mutually supportive team. They have detailed knowledge of the subjects they teach, and draw on the expertise of others, for example to plan or teach French, RE or art. Teaching assistants are an integral and essential part of the teaching team. They are well-trained and effectively deployed to support the individual needs of pupils, both academically and behaviourally. Teachers liaise closely with their teaching assistants so that in-class support for pupils is maximised.
- Lessons are calm and purposeful but busy and demanding of pupils. Teachers continually assess what pupils are learning with well-focused questioning, enabling rapid intervention when misconceptions occur. Crucially, teachers also allow pupils

sufficient time to draft, review and edit their work to improve it.

- Well-established routines ensure that pupils quickly learn to work with maturity and independence. Because pupils are used to working together cooperatively, they confidently share their ideas and opinions and learn from each other.
- Assessment is a notable strength because it informs teaching and accelerates pupils' progress. Teachers characteristically check what pupils know and can do before they embark on a new area of learning. This enables teachers to pitch work at the right level for different groups.
- Teachers skilfully plan their lessons through topics which they bring to life, for example through the recent Viking day where Year 5 pupils dressed up and worked with an expert historian to learn about Viking culture, warfare and trade. Pupils were so excited to handle artefacts and facsimiles of weapons, helmets and jewellery. They also made excellent use of their preliminary learning, which had equipped them well to make the most of the theme day. Teachers set suitably challenging homework to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.
- As a result of strong and effective teaching, and the combination of high expectations, appropriate challenge and the skilful use of assessment, the most able pupils are consistently stretched in their learning.
- Adults model positive attitudes and values, including those of tolerance and mutual respect, and strongly support pupils' moral and social development through their high expectations of behaviour and conduct. The engaging curriculum effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and teachers are alert to opportunities to promote pupils' understanding of British values. For example, pupils studying the Second World War were able to explain the difference between propaganda and impartial information.
- The vast majority of pupils love reading and, by the end of Year 6, can read with exceptional fluency and mature comprehension. They are taught to skim and scan text, as well as read for deeper meaning within a culture of enjoying books.
- Teaching across all subjects is highly effective. Nevertheless, pupils sometimes do not achieve as much as they could on those small number of occasions when, in subjects such as history, geography and religious education, feedback is not provided consistently in line with school policy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Staff prioritise pupils' social, physical and emotional well-being because they believe that pupils' welfare underpins their personal development and academic achievement. Pupils know how to keep themselves healthy. Their work on display shows how this is woven into the curriculum. Staff ensure that as many pupils as possible are involved in extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe at school. A parent described the school as 'a really safe, clean, happy place to bring my child'. Staff know the individual needs of pupils and are

sensitive to these, without compromising their expectations of either behaviour or achievement.

- Pupils recognise different forms of bullying, but say that misbehaviour of any sort at the school is rare. When an incident happens, it is immediately reported and teachers sort it out. Pupils say that they feel entirely safe because the school is such a friendly place, and they know that adults will always be there to help if they have a problem. Pupils say that they are listened to and feel that they have a voice.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe online. They understand the risks of inappropriate use of social media.
- Pupils are given the chance for wider experiences that can be life enhancing. In addition to the annual Year 6 residential trip to the Isle of Wight, Year 4 pupils spend three days at Cuffley Camp and in Year 5 the venue is Hudnall Park. The resilience and self-confidence that pupils develop on these visits prepare them well to overcome any personal challenges and also for the next stage of their education. If pupils choose not to go, the headteacher organises an activities week with events, such as a river study and pond dipping. This ensures that no one misses out on exciting, beyond-the-classroom learning.
- Pupils are inspired to make the most of their particular aptitudes and interests. Sports ambassadors promote activities, including judo, swimming and athletics. There is a good range of clubs on offer, including running, Lego, dodge ball, street dance, art and many more. Teachers make good use of a dedicated, well-equipped art room and there is also a kiln for pottery work. Every pupil in Year 3 has weekly violin lessons and many pupils also choose to have keyboard, violin, guitar, clarinet or piano lessons.
- The school takes positive steps to develop pupils' self-assurance by setting challenging but achievable tasks, such as talking to the school in assembly or performing to a large audience. Pupils are given the confidence to compete in sport against other schools, and a very good range of sporting contests are organised using the sport premium funding.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are impeccably behaved in lessons and around the school. They are polite, thoughtful and considerate towards one another and with adults and visitors. Pupils are also happy, cheerful, chatty and sociable.
- On day 2 of the inspection, the whole school attended the achievement assembly. Pupils in the audience listened intently and sustained their concentration well. Pupils showed genuine appreciation for the efforts and achievements of their classmates, and the standard of work being celebrated, especially in art and mathematics, was very high.
- Pupils quickly become self-assured and confident learners who take responsibility for their own learning and progress. Pupils learn how to edit and improve their own work, taking genuine pride in its presentation and quality. They do not shy away from difficult tasks and enjoy choosing the most demanding questions.
- Pupils enjoy school and attend well. Attendance has increased steadily since the last

inspection and is currently well above the national figure. The previously high level of persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils has been eradicated. It is extremely rare for any child to be excluded.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Standards in English and mathematics have remained very high in the four years since the previous inspection. Results in the recent national tests and assessments for 11-year-olds indicate that attainment in writing and mathematics is once again well above the national figures, and above the national average in reading. Results in the assessment for grammar, punctuation and spelling are also well above the national figures.
- These impressive results, sustained over several years, alongside evidence from pupils' work and the school's systematic assessment information, show that pupils make exceptional progress from their different starting points, even when they join the school after the start of Year 3. Pupils' progress is consistently strong in every year group because teachers' expectations are high. Intervention is swift at the first sign of a child falling behind.
- Any gaps in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils are negligible. Disadvantaged pupils often make significantly better progress than pupils nationally due to the highly effective support they receive.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make progress in line with that of other pupils because support for their learning is so effective.
- High-quality teaching together with the excellent use of assessment enable pupils to make substantial progress across all areas of learning and to acquire excellent knowledge, understanding and skills. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	117160
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10036154

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rod Woodhouse
Headteacher	Julie Henley
Telephone number	01923 221877
Website	www.fieldjm.herts.sch.uk/
Email address	head@fieldjm.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 September 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is slightly above the average size for a primary school.
- The proportion of the pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- Two thirds of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and nearly half speak English as an additional language.
- No pupils are educated off-site or through alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average, while the proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and

care plan is below average.

- The school is currently working to renew the Artsmark Gold Award.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in a series of lesson observations and learning walks across all nine classes and in different subjects in order to inform judgements about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers and groups of pupils. Inspectors also met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with a representative from the 'Herts for Learning' school improvement team.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, action plans and the school development plan, school policies, safeguarding documents, pupils' progress information, attendance data and a wide range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke informally with parents at the start of the inspection and took note of their views through the 39 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, which included a number of free-text responses, and also analysed the school's own parental survey information.
- Inspectors spoke formally to a group of pupils, and also talked to pupils in lessons about their work, and spoke informally to pupils on the playground and at lunchtime and breaktimes.

Inspection team

Nick Rudman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Coton	Ofsted Inspector
Dominic Carver	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Copping	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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